

RECORD OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BROOKLINE SCHOOL COMMITTEE HELD ON **THURSDAY, MARCH 17, 2016** AT 6:00 PM IN THE JAMES F. WALSH SCHOOL COMMITTEE ROOM, 5<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR, TOWN HALL. STATUTORY NOTICE OF THIS MEETING WAS FILED WITH THE TOWN CLERK.

School Committee Members Present: Ms. Ditkoff (Chairman), Ms. Scotto (Vice Chairman), Mr. Chang, Ms. Charlupski, Mr. Glover, Dr. Jackson, Mr. Pollak, Ms. Stone, and Ms. Stram (by phone). Also present: Dr. Connelly, Dr. Fischer-Mueller, Ms. Dunn, Mr. Lummis, Mr. Kahn, and Ms. Coyne.

Ms. Ditkoff called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. She announced that Ms. Stram will be participating remotely, by phone, because she has determined that geographic distance makes Ms. Stram's physical attendance unreasonably difficult.

**1. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS**

**a. Calendar**

Ms. Ditkoff noted upcoming events on the calendar.

**b. Consent Agenda**

Dr. Connelly will provide the School Committee with an update on the status of spring student trips.

**ACTION 16-12**

On a motion of Ms. Scotto and seconded by Ms. Stone, the School Committee VOTED, by roll call, (Mr. Chang abstained because he was not at the March 10, 2016 meeting) to approve the item included in the Consent Agenda.

- i. Out-of-State Student Field Trip: Baker School 8<sup>th</sup> Grade to New York City; June 9, 2016-June 10, 2016 (Attachment A)

**2. UPDATE ON SUPERINTENDENT TRANSITION PROCESS**

Dr. Jackson provided an update on the Superintendent transition process (Attachment B). The search process principles were as follows: 1) Impact-top priority is to hire an outstanding educational leader; this will guide all decision-making; 2) Transparency-share and communicate expectations so staff and the community know what is happening and how it is happening; 3) Efficiency-hit our deadlines to hire by spring 2016 (assuming the impact condition is met); and 4) Engagement-engage and involve multiple stakeholders to get their input and feedback. Dr. Jackson reviewed the timeline and described the role of Atlantic Research Partners. She noted that community partners, town agencies, and school and district staff participated in focus groups. Dr. Jackson summarized the demographics, education, and geographic location of the 29 applicants.

The Superintendent Search Subcommittee of the School Committee was formed to consider applicants and interview applicants, and to recommend finalist candidates

(Andrew Bott, Jon Sills, and Bernard Taylor). A Finalist Review Committee was formed to inform the School Committee's choice among the three finalist candidates. The Committee was comprised of representatives from four different groups: teachers, principals, parents/community members, and School Committee members. The public was invited to interviews with each finalist and invited to submit feedback for consideration by the School Committee by an online survey.

The School Committee met and reviewed Finalist Review Committee feedback, public feedback, and additional information on finalists from references and other background checks. Using a rubric that draws on the Public Schools of Brookline Leadership Profile and the Massachusetts Department of Early and Secondary Education superintendent evaluations criteria, the School Committee discussed the strengths and challenges of each finalist. The School Committee had a non-binding "straw poll" vote to understand members' preferences and the result was six preferred Mr. Bott, one preferred Mr. Sills, and two were not ready to declare a preference.

School Committee comments on Mr. Bott were as follows: significant experience (14 years as a principal who managed complex state mandates, a budget, and significant engagement with the teachers union and senior leaders, staff and elected, in Boston); reputation as an effective communicator, culture builder, and relationship builder within a building and among school/community institutions; experience as a coach and mentor to other principals; success in hiring and retaining high quality staff, including staff of color; a supportive leader who holds people accountable; a visionary instructional leader; gaps in experience include lack of system-wide administrative experience and high school experience; reference checks indicated that rapid mastery of complex problems was a particular strength across various school and community settings.

School Committee members noted that we had three highly qualified candidates to choose from. Though they brought varying experiences from various types of districts, they respectively had strengths and qualities that would greatly benefit the Public Schools of Brookline. Ms. Stone explained why she intends to vote for Mr. Bott, noting that her focus is on hiring for Brookline's future. Mr. Bott is an exciting leader with all the qualities the community expressed as highest priorities. He will need support and mentoring, but has done nothing in the past 14 years but step up to big challenges and succeed. Ms. Scotto agreed with Ms. Stone's comments, noting that she believes Mr. Bott will best be able to address community, culture, and morale issues. She noted that he is a superb instructional leader who puts students at the center, understands how to change culture and climate, and could make visionary changes. Ms. Charlupski agreed that we were fortunate to have three excellent finalists. She favored Mr. Sills for his experience as a superintendent and his experience in Brookline, but noted that he withdrew his application. She will be voting for Mr. Bott and looks forward to him being an effective leader of our district. Ms. Ditkoff stated that in coming to a decision, she thought about how each candidate would do in different settings, e.g., working with town bodies and agencies, parents/guardians, staff, and considered what only the superintendent could do and what could be hired/supported around that individual. Mr.

Bott will bring an educational lens to all those conversations and will bring purpose and direction to address our needs and issues. She was impressed by his demonstrated commitment to excellence and equity for all students, his track record of success in challenging situations, his experience in building a shared educational vision, and his ability to create positive, inclusive professional and community cultures. Ms. Stram agreed with previous comments and noted that she believes that Mr. Bott could best help address our priorities and could make transformation change.

- i. **Vote to appoint a Superintendent of the Public Schools of Brookline, conditioned upon the successful negotiation of a mutually agreeable contract of employment approved by both parties and signed by the Superintendent of Schools and the Brookline School Committee**

**ACTION 16-13**

On a motion of Dr. Jackson and seconded by Ms. Scotto, the School Committee VOTED UNANIMOUSLY, by roll call, to appoint Andrew Bott Superintendent of the Public Schools of Brookline, conditioned upon the successful negotiation of a mutually agreeable contract of employment approved by both parties and signed by the Superintendent of Schools and the Brookline School Committee.

Ms. Ditkoff expressed her appreciation to Dr. Jackson for leading the search process and to the teachers, staff, parents, guardians, students and residents who participated in the process over the past four months.

**3. SUBCOMMITTEE AND LIAISON REPORTS**

**a. Finance**

Ms. Stram reported that the Finance Subcommittee met on March 14, 2016. The Subcommittee discussed the FY 2017 budget. Discussion focused on the use of reserves and investments in educational equity. The next meeting of the Finance Subcommittee will take place on March 28, 2016.

[Ms. Stram ended her remote participation.]

**b. Capital Improvements**

Mr. Pollak reported that the Capital Improvements Subcommittee met on March 11, 2016. The Subcommittee discussed the 9<sup>th</sup> School Site Search Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for concept studies focused on the Baker, Baldwin and Stop & Shop sites. The RFQ will be advertised in the Central Register on March 23, 2016. The Subcommittee discussed work that will be done outside of the studies, e.g., legal analysis and community meetings. Mr. Lummis will assist with outreach. Mr. Pollak, Ms. Charlupski, and Ms. Stone will be the School Committee's representatives on the Committee of 7. The Subcommittee also discussed Brookline High School expansion planning. A staff working group will be meeting over the next few months to review the SMMA Brookline High School study. The Subcommittee reviewed the Capital

Improvements Program and major projects. One proposal is to include \$800,000 in FY 2017 for school studies (possible breakdown, \$300,000 for 9<sup>th</sup> school feasibility/ project management and \$500,000 for high school feasibility/project management and \$2.3 million in FY 2018 for schematic design (possible breakdown, \$1 million for the 9<sup>th</sup> school and \$1.3 million for the high school). The Advisory Committee has established a Long-range Planning Subcommittee. Chairman of the Board of Selectmen Neil Wishinsky and members of the School Committee joined the Park and Recreation Commission on March 15, 2016 for a 9<sup>th</sup> School Study Public Hearing and Discussion: Focus on South Brookline Sites including Baldwin School, Baker School and the Golf Course and Impact to or Use of Parks. Ms. Ditkoff stated that she would like to have a broader conversation on whether we might be able to find a creative solution that results in no net loss of open space. The next meeting of the Capital Improvements Subcommittee will take place on April 8, 2016.

**c. Curriculum**

Ms. Charlupski reported that the Curriculum Subcommittee will be meeting on March 22, 2016 to review the Lincoln and Baker School Improvement Plans. The Subcommittee will be meeting on March 31, 2016 for a Technology Update.

**d. Government Relations**

Ms. Stone thanked Mr. Lummis for adding a Negotiations Update section on the School Committee Webpage. Ms. Ditkoff reported that the annual METCO lobbying day took place on March 15, 2016. A Change.Org petition was started to promote METCO funding.

**e. Policy Review**

Dr. Jackson reported that the Policy Review Subcommittee met this morning and discussed proposed changes to the Public Schools of Brookline Physical Restraint Policy. The Subcommittee voted to recommend that the School Committee vote to amend the policy to prohibit the use of prone restraint. The Subcommittee will be continuing discussion of applicability of the policy to non-PSB personnel, e.g., police officers. The Subcommittee began a review of anti-bullying, anti-discrimination, and anti-harassment policies to ensure that they are up-to-date and consistent. The next meeting of the Policy Review Subcommittee will take place on April 14, 2016.

**f. Additional Liaisons and Updates**

Mr. Glover reported that he attended the Steps to Success (STS) Board meeting on March 16, 2016. STS received confirmation of its status as a 501c3 organization. The Board discussed a proposed pilot program at Brookline High School (BHS) focused on providing students from low-income households with skills, tools and techniques to be successful in college and beyond. The BHS Academic Standards Committee rejected the request. The proposal will be reworked based on feedback and resubmitted. The Board also discussed concerns about the cost of summer school tuition for students from low-income households. In response to a question, Mr. Glover said that he would check whether we provide assistance with college application fees. Dr. Jackson suggested

partnering with the Brookline Community Foundation to raise funds to subsidize summer school tuition. The Committee discussed the advantages and disadvantages of providing the skill building in an after-school forum vs as a class. Dr. Jackson offered her assistance in framing the proposal in terms of 21<sup>st</sup> Century social-emotional skills. Dr. Fischer-Mueller stated that the curriculum is outstanding and a priority and the BHS administration has been meeting with the STS administration to discuss issues such as course credit and the best venue.

Dr. Fischer-Mueller reported on the Minority Student Achievement Network (MSAN) meetings in Shaker Heights, Ohio. Communities are implementing similar initiatives to try to close the achievement gap, but they recognize that it is really about instruction in the classroom and that we cannot program our way out of an achievement gap. Dr. Fischer-Mueller noted an instrumental and performing arts program for very young children and steps being taken to attract/retain more diverse staff, e.g., partnering with colleges and providing housing allowances.

Ms. Scotto reported that she attended the Brookline Education Foundation Board meeting on March 14, 2016. A Brookline High School Biology teacher spoke about her experience at a national conference of science teachers. The 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Spelling Bee took place on March 13, 2016. The 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala will be held on April 2, 2016.

Mr. Chang reported that he attended the Commission for Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Relations meeting on March 16, 2016. He provided an overview of the superintendent search process. Mr. Chang also reported that he attended the Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) monthly meeting, which was an information session on the Extended School Year Program and Recreation Department programs.

Ms. Charlupski reported that she attended an event celebrating the life of Brookline resident Marvin Minsky who died on January 24, 2016. Dr. Minsky was an American cognitive scientist in the field of artificial intelligence and co-founder of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's AI laboratory. He was married to Dr. Gloria Rudisch who is Brookline's Director of Child Health Services.

#### **4. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mary Dewart, a member of the Brookline Climate Week Steering Committee, invited people to participate in Brookline Climate Week, which presents opportunities for citizens of all ages through a series of events over the course of one week. While its roots originate in Brookline, it also seeks to partner and collaborate with surrounding communities in a common and shared purpose and as part of a global climate movement. It takes the efforts of many, and especially the young, for the movement to sustain itself and to ultimately achieve a future that we all want and deserve.

Julia Lanham, a Baker parent and Chair of the Baker Site Council, spoke about the superintendent search process. She noted that the consultant hired to assist with the

process was white and from a white firm. Optics matter and attempts should have made to recruit more diverse firms. Ms. Lanham noted that the two finalists were white men. We need to make changes if we want to make progress on closing the achievement gap.

## 5. STUDENT REPORT

Mr. Kahn provided the following report.

*It's a large transition time at Brookline High School (BHS). Freshmen, sophomores, and juniors are selecting courses for next year. The selection process is earlier than in the past so that the school can better anticipate the needs for specific courses and work out schedule kinks. Most seniors are planning on what comes next. Students not planning on attending college can utilize the career planner. College-bound students this month are waiting for the majority of college decisions to come in.*

*Although many students are thinking about what comes next, many students are still committed to making the school and society that they live in better now. Last week, the Amnesty International organization at BHS hosted a day to correspond with International Women's Day. They hosted a half-dozen speakers throughout the day who talked about women in education, sex ed, women's treatment in other parts of the world, and women in government. This day elevated conversations about gender to almost the entire school.*

*Next month, the Gay Trans Straight Alliance will host its annual Day of Dialogue, which comes before the national Day of Silence. On this day, many students share personal stories about queer identity, and there are assemblies designed to represent multifaceted experience of being queer. It's a powerful day and is important to educate the student body. Even as we become more accepting of queer people in Brookline, being queer can still be hard and Day of Dialogue serves to make students be heard and represented and not alone. It creates a dialogue which hopefully makes the school a safer and more comfortable space.*

*Today was the second annual Asking for Courage day focused on race. I've been to a lot of assembly days in my four years of high school. I thought this one was the most relevant, most powerful, and most well executed day yet. The assemblies covered a wide variety of identities and topics. A lot of adults helped shape the day, but today felt like it was truly run by the students. Students shared personal experiences, answered questions, and explained ideas and movements. I heard stories and experiences of people I've gone to school with for four years which I've never heard before. And now I will think more about what I say and the effects it has on my peers and any person I meet. The day was video recorded, and I encourage you all to watch parts of it. There were a few things that I came away with that I wanted to share.*

*First, teachers make a huge difference—I heard about amazing teachers, who day after day make positive impacts in the lives of students. I also heard about teachers that need more education before they can do the same.*

*Second, peers, and pressures associated with peers, filled most of the stories I heard today. Peers can help promote pride and provide comfort and humor and all sorts of positive things. There are also the negative effects peers can have. There were mentions of acts of hate speech, like the Kahoot incident this month. But there were even more mentions of students who didn't consider the consequences of making insensitive comments, which accumulate over time to be degrading. I kept on thinking about how we in the school can stop toxic comments. I repeatedly heard many of the stories allude back to elementary school. I don't know much about elementary school curriculum, but I know that when I was younger I made comments that I only now understand are harmful. We almost never talked about them at school, and it is only after maturing and, most importantly, hearing from my peers that I know things we hear from 1st and 8th graders alike are unacceptable. I know that Bedford has incorporated identity into the K-12 curriculum, and I'm curious if Brookline has done anything like this as well. Educating students about identity from a young age is imperative since if a student comes to the high school unprepared to talk about identity, we as a community are at a great disadvantage. K-8 schools give us a tremendous opportunity to make our students into positive citizens. The high school can then further this already-started process.*

*Third, no one thinks changing centuries of racism and oppression is easy. I think it is important for adults to hear this when they feel students are making strong claims. No one expects you to be superheroes, and many students are here to help, but students do feel, and should feel, the need to hold administrators accountable. One speaker today pointed out that students will help improve the school (find solutions/advocate), but at the end of the day, it is students' jobs to learn, and administrators' jobs to lead to the school to be a better place.*

#### **6. PUBLIC HEARING ON THE FY 2017 BUDGET AND SCHOOL CHOICE**

Ms. Ditkoff stated that the School Choice Law contained in the Education Reform Act of 1993 presumes that each School Committee will admit non-resident students under the School Choice Program, unless there is a vote to the contrary by June 1 of each year. The vote must follow a hearing on the issue of whether or not to participate. We are combining the public hearings on the budget and School Choice since the proposed FY 2017 budget does not include funds for School Choice. The School Committee plans to vote on the FY 2017 Budget on April 14, 2016 and vote on School Choice at the first School Committee meeting after the election, May 5, 2016. The budget public hearing is an opportunity for the public to express their concerns with the proposed budget. The School Committee welcomes and will be listening very carefully to these concerns, but, as is our practice, will not be responding to individual comments.

No members of the public requested to speak so the public hearing was closed.

#### **7. NEW BUSINESS**

Ms. Dunn provided an update on the FY 2017 budget. The FY 2017 and FY 2018 cost for transporting Devotion students will be included in the project budget, not the operating budget. This frees up \$421,000 in FY 2017 that can be used to restore items

such as a digital learning specialist, a .75 building craftsman, a Devotion building aide, and to build back the special education reserve for unforeseen expenses for consulting and tuitions.

**8. PROPOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION**

By unanimous roll call vote at 8:10 PM, the School Committee entered into Executive Session for Purpose 2, to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel, i.e., the Superintendent, and for Purpose 3, to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining (Brookline Educators Union-Units A, B, and Paras) because the Chairman has declared that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the School Committee's bargaining position. By unanimous roll call vote at 9:30 PM, the School Committee reconvened in public session.

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

Ms. Ditkoff adjourned the meeting at 9:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Robin E. Coyne, Executive Assistant  
Brookline School Committee